

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-18 (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) A method for decoding packetized program information to provide data content of a program, comprising the steps of:

identifying ancillary information in said packetized program information, said ancillary information including a plurality of partition tables having program specific data partitioned therein, a control table for acquiring and re-assembling the partitioned program specific data disposed in the plurality of partition tables, and information describing a multimedia image object associated with an image in said packetized program information, said multimedia object description information comprising,

(a) a location indicator identifying a location of a multimedia object for use in acquiring said multimedia object, and

(b) a type indicator identifying a multimedia object type for use in decoding said multimedia object;

forming a program guide for display, using the tables;

acquiring and decoding said multimedia object using said multimedia object description information; and

formatting said multimedia object for display.

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19, including the step of associating said multimedia object with one of (a) a video image, and (b) audio data.

21. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 20, including the step of forming a composite image for display combining said multimedia object and at least one of, (a) an electronic program guide, (b) a video program, and (c) an Internet web page image.

22-48 (Cancelled)

49. (Previously Presented) A method for providing packetized program information to provide data content of a program, comprising the steps of:

partitioning program specific data into a plurality of partition tables;

generating a control table for acquiring and re-assembling the program specific data disposed in the plurality of partition tables;

incorporating, into any of tables, (a) a location indicator identifying a location of a multimedia object, and (b) a type indicator identifying a multimedia object type for use in decoding the multimedia object; and

transmitting the plurality of tables and control table in packets for subsequent use in forming a program guide that references the multimedia object and in acquiring the multimedia object using at least the location indicator and the type indicator.

50. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 49, further comprising the step of formatting the plurality of tables and the control table according to one of a selected media and protocol, in preparation for said transmitting step.

51. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 49, Wherein the program specific ~~information~~ data comprises at least one of network types, time segments, channel groups, transport stream channel groupings and event types.

52. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 49, wherein said location indicator is capable of identifying a location of said multimedia object in any of (a) said packetized program information from ~~said a~~ first source, and (b) information derived from a second source different to said first source.

53. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 52, wherein said location indicator is capable of identifying a location of said multimedia object derived from said first source using any of (a) an MPEG compatible packet Identifier (PID), and (b) an MPEG compatible Digital Storage Media code.

54. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 52, wherein said location indicator is capable of identifying a location of said multimedia object derived from said second source using any of (a) an Internet URL, (b) an Internet IP address, (c) an Email address, and (d) a telephone / fax / videophone number.

55. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 49, wherein said multimedia object type comprises at least one of. (a) a video segment or still image, (b) an audio segment, (c) text, (d) an Internet web page or Internet data, (e) an advertisement, (f) an icon for user selection of a service, (g) an animation segment, (h) an Email message, (i) a user prompting indicator, and (j) a broadcast channel identification icon.

56. (Cancelled)

57. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 49, wherein said formatting step comprises the step of associating said multimedia object with one of (a) a video image, and (b) audio data, and said formatting means forms a composite image for display combining said multimedia object and at least one of, (a) an electronic program guide, (b) a video program, and (c) an Internet web page image.